# Central American NEWSLETTER

Newsletter of the Central American Group of the Spanish Main Society.

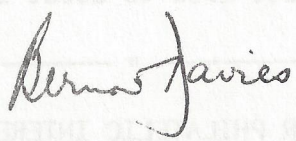
Editor: Bernard Davies, 16, Lynwood Close, Gordon Road, South Woodford, London E18 1DP 01-504-5042

Issue No 10 December 1982

## EDITORIAL

I hope that 1983 will prove a happy and successful year for you and yours.

I use these New Year felicitations as an excuse for abandoning the Editorial "we" on this occasion, so that I may offer my personal thanks to several members whose friendship has extended well beyond the "call of duty" to offering us the support of their expert knowledge or the use of their extensive material within their specialist fields of interest. First, as always, must come our Hon. President, John Fosbery, whose enthusiasm is unbounded; he first dreamed up the idea of Groups - members with similar areas of interest exchanging ideas, questions and cris du coeur - and he has always helped me from his vast depths of wisdom and experience, making his many valuable contacts available to me when need arose. Without John, this Newsletter would never have managed to run into double figures. With his help behind us, we look forward to the next ten, and then the next ten ... Of the specialist collectors who have helped me unstintingly I must give pride of place to Kilian Nathan, surely the most knowledgeable and certainly the most helpful collector of Nicaragua in the wide world; and to Richard Washburn, whose residence in Central America is a useful bonus, when one considers his vast interest in and knowledge of the area. Both these gentlemen have afforded me invaluable help and encouragement, as have Leo Harris and Doug. Bayliss with their wide and shrewd philatelic interests, and George Richardson with his unique talent for enlightening collections from the results of his searches among the Cambridge bookshops. Finally, I must thank the present Chairman, through whose hands a very high proportion of the Latin American material on sale in the U.K. passes. Brian Moorhouse has always proved most willing to help me by referring to material he has or has had in his stock; such a constant source of reference material is invaluable. My heartfelt thanks to these and to the many other C.A. philatelists who have made enjoyable what so easily could have been a chore.



If any members need help with exhibition entries, they might be interested to know that our member, John Evans, of 31 Fairfield Road, WIMBORNE, Dorset BH21 2AS, can supply a good light card of the correct size at 4p per sheet. He can offer a writing up service at from £4 to £7 per sheet, the exact price depending upon the amount of art-work involved. He can also provide "blow-up" reproductions of stamps, illustrations, etc. in black and white or in colour. Contact John for details, or write to him via the Editor. (John himself collects principally, Venezuela, and would love to hear from others with an interest in this country.)

B.D.

## CAUSERIE

1001 Roberta Palen comments on Alan Barrow's request for information concerning the Balboa Post Office (Newsletter, September 1982). "There was a Post Office at Balboa several years prior to the opening of the Canal. I assume that this is the same site as the present-day city of Balboa. The Annual Report of the Isthmian Canal Commission for 1909 is the first such report which lists Balboa in the statistical section (p 270). A total of 5582 registered pieces of mail (letters and parcels) was recorded for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1909. The narrative report, however, gives no indication of the opening of this post office. The Canal Record of March 11, 1914 (v.7, No 29, pp 276-7) indicates that a town of Balboa would soon be laid out with buildings constructed around structures already in place."

Doug. Bayliss states that the cover illustrated is not a Paquebot cover. The cancellation as stated by the contributor, is the standard Balboa duplex, but it is not the Balboa Paquebot duplex, "and I am content to accept the date 1917 given by Studd for the latter until an earlier one turns up. This may well happen, as Denis Vandervelde has a cover with the Ancon duplex December 28th 1912 and with the Ancon Paquebot struck alongside. The letter contained samples of kapok and was carried by the steamer Quito. It is possible that the straightline "SHIP'S LETTER" is a private mark.

1002 Some additions to or extensions of our listing of the Nicaraguan Cartero marks have been received. From Bernard Davies comes LEON Cartero No 1 with Buzon mark dispatched to Managua 6th February 1903; from Doug. Bayliss there is mention of MANAGUA Type I No 3 May 17th., 1900 and June 17th., 1903; and MANAGUA Type IV No 4 December 10th 1904 (5 p.m.). B.D.'s Leon strike is Type VIII, the smaller of the circles listed. He has also discovered a Leon Cartero No 4, with Buzon and also a Managua Cartero No 1 arrival strike, sent May 23rd., 1901.

1003 Richard Washburn asks for all the information readers have on the Honduras SG157 -90th Anniversary Independence overprint on the 2cts green Steamboat. He says "I firmly believe that this overprint appears on both the perf. 12 and the perf. 14 - not just on the perf. 12 as both Scott and SG state." Richard also asks us to say that he is looking for a mint 5 ctv. perf. 12 SG142a; also any copy of the SG140 or 141 imperf.; and he would be interested in used copies of SG1 and 2. Any offers via the Editor, please.

1004 Has anyone come across an EL SALVADOR stamp 6c on 12c monument issue overprint in red like SG530a but with larger figure 6 (like the SG illustration number 77 of the 5)? Your Editor, who already had one of these stamps mint and one apparently used, has now found one on an indubitably genuine used cover. He will give a fuller account of it in the next Newsletter, but meanwhile would like to hear from anyone who possesses this or any other uncatalogued variety of EL SALVADOR which has clearly been accepted through the post. The period of interest is from about 1900 to about 1921, with emphasis on 1905-6.

---

## WHAT DO YOU COLLECT? WHAT ARE YOUR PHILATELIC INTERESTS?

It would seem that the SPANISH MAIN'S records of collectors' interests are not always up-to-date. Some of the forms were filled in five or six years ago, and a lot can happen in that time. The Editor would therefore be grateful if readers of the Newsletter could drop him a brief note stating (1) The Central American countries in which they are interested; (2) Any periods or issues in which they have a special interest; (3) Any other Latin American countries in which they have an interest; (4) Any countries from other areas of the world of philately in which they are interested; (5) Any themes transcending national frontiers which interest them - e.g. not only such "themes" as sport/flowers/ships/ducks/gorillas etc. on stamps, but, say, postal stationery or maritime mail or wreck covers etc. of a region. We are not providing a tear-off slip for answer (although we admit that if this request for information falls on deaf ears we may have to do so) because we know that some members do not like to "vandalize" their Newsletters, and because, in our experience, any precise fill-in slip tends to be inhibiting.

THE EDITOR

# THE 1877 SURCHARGES OF HONDURAS by RICHARD WASHBURN

The following is the text of a letter to Stanley Gibbons Publications Ltd. by Richard Washburn. It is reproduced here with the permission of both parties:-

"You state in your letter that if I ever found any evidence of legitimate use of the "Comayagua" surcharges Nos 3,7 and 10 to advise, and that perhaps the editors might reconsider the decision in 1980, to delete these from the catalogue.

On Tuesday, June 8, 1982, I visited the British Library, Philatelic section, with the Superintendent R F S West, to see the Honduras part of the Tapling collection. Both Mr West and I looked at the Comayagua surcharges and found two in used condition.

I must again reiterate my thesis that the framed type surcharges formerly Nos 3,7 and 10, which conform to the government decree of March, 1877, and possible No 9, should again be listed.

Probably, the most logical explanation as to the scarcity of the "Comayagua" type surcharges comes from the news bit published in the Guia del Coleccionista de Sellos de Correos published in Valparaiso, Chile, in June, 1882. The correspondent for this publication was probably José Antonio López - General Director of Posts in Honduras in 1878-79, (refer the February, 1879, (No 14) issue of this same "Guia". The statement in Spanish referring to the framed type surcharge (SG10), reads: ..."fue usado cuando la Dirección de Correos funcionaba aun en Comayagua (funciona ahora en Tegucigalpa)". This means that this type of surcharge was made right after the March 31, 1877, decree authorized their use, most likely under the watchful eye of the government Treasury and Postal authorities while they were still located in Comayagua.

According to the historical records all the government offices moved from Comayagua to Tegucigalpa in August of 1877, or just four months after the Guia Postal, giving the terms of the postal decree of March 31, 1877, was published by Tipográfia Nacional, Calle del Telegrafo, Comayagua, in April of 1877.

I believe then that the "Comayagua" or framed type surcharges were made and distributed to the postal agencies only during the April to July period 1877, from the Comayagua Directorate of Posts and for general use. It would seem logical to assume that the authorities would want to produce what looked to be an artistic way of applying the surcharge, by putting a wavy frame about the value. As it turned out, the framed surcharges were not very legible, and for this reason, the wavy frame design was recalled and replaced by a simpler unframed type design. Mr Ignacio Agurcia mentions another possibility in his article (Oxcart No 70, March 1978); the traditional rivalry between these two cities, Comayagua being the stronghold of the conservation and heirs of the colonial aristocrats, and Tegucigalpa, that of the liberal reformists, would dictate not to use a Comayagua surcharge, once the authorities moved to Tegucigalpa in August of 1877. Unframed surcharge types were then made there and distributed for general use, between August 1877, and July 1878. This means that the substituted framed "remainders" were called in and kept in the Treasury vaults until the issue was demonetized in August, 1878. None of these were disposed of (probably sold) until the early 1880's. This is why the philatelic press did not receive the information of their existence until about 1881-2.

The fact that a genuine framed surcharge "dos reales" in blue, but mistakenly done on the green stamp, was surcharged with a genuine "un real" (unframed "Tegucigalpa" Type) in black as per decree specifications in my mind indicates the government Treasury agency responsible for the control of the sheets of stamps had these recalled or unsuitable framed surcharges in existence (on inventory). The "dos reales" in blue is a light impression, the value almost indistinguishable, and very well could have been confused with the normal unsurcharged green stamps, or the resurcharge "un real" in black

considered ultimate value. This double surcharge is in the Tapling collection (formerly SG30a, Scott 13b), an indication of legitimacy, given the year the gentleman stopped collecting.

Another reason to believe the two types of surcharges were made in 1877, is that the red sealing wax, and black India type inks, and the distinctive shade of grayish ultramarine ink used in the three known, and agreed genuine, unframed types SG Nos 13,19 30 are basically the same inks used in the framed type surcharges you now deem no longer worthy of listing as of 1980, even though Mr H R Holmes's article was written 25 years prior to your action.

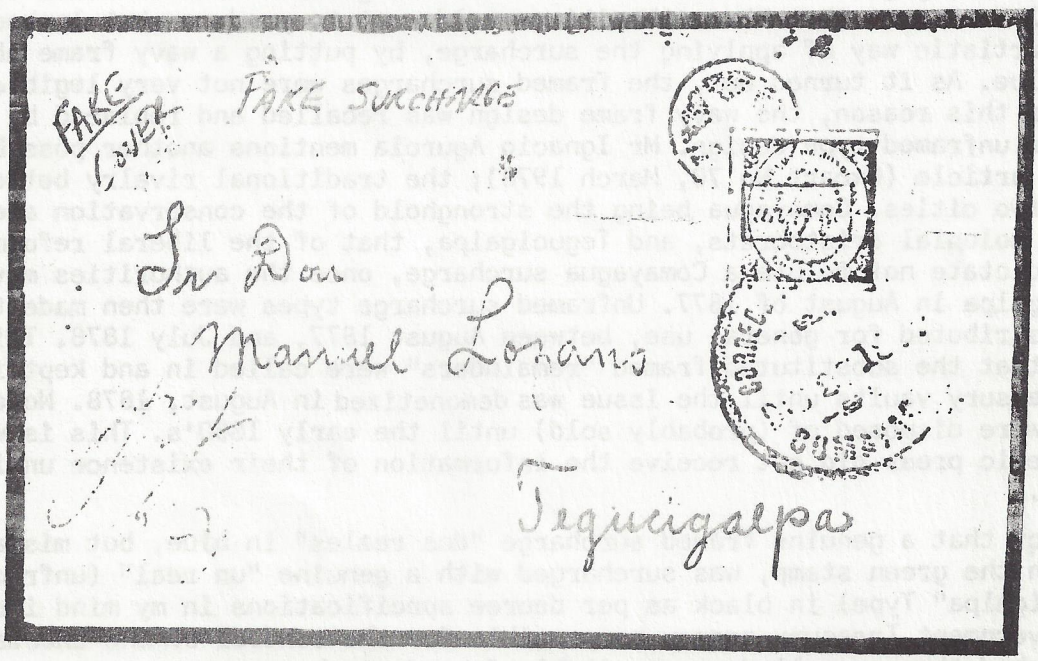
We hope you will discuss this with your editors, and perhaps mention my arguments to Mr H R Holmes to see if he believes the three frames type "Comayagua" surcharges worthy of listing."

R A Washburn

In correspondence with Bernard Davies, Richard Washburn says that a key point is that "the Treasury Department held the stamps and the Director General of Posts (only ONE Direccion General de Correos) requests the stamps from the Treasury. It still works this way in Honduras. My point is then that for the few months in early 1877, while the Direccion General, or the Treasury, or both, were in Comayagua, they started with this framed surcharge. It was illegible - or almost. The government moved all its offices to Tegucigalpa in August of 1877; they then made the single line surcharges and the Treasury dept. stayed with the original surcharges in the vaults until the whole issue was demonetized in 1878. See June 22nd., 1878 Acuerdo issuing the Morazan stamps and requesting in Article 2 that the Treasury collect the provisionals that the Direccion Jeneral (sic) will send to them."

No genuine covers bearing the 1877 surcharges are known. According to Harrison Hale Schaff "a big batch of covers were faked and sold in Nassau St." The late Irving Green names Krebs as "the one supposed to have offered them to dealers and collectors in the U.S.". Green suggests that this 1926 batch was probably "made up" in the Republic of Honduras "and today are extremely scarce".

Richard Washburn has passed on two photocopies of these covers, which Irving Green sent to him with the above comment. They are illustrated below, and on the next page.




Backstamp: "Correos de Honduras, Tegucigalpa. DIC 30 1877"

Backstamp: "Correos de Honduras, Choluteca. AGO 19 1877"

---

KEEP POLITICS OUT .....

We are accustomed to the cry "Keep politics out of sport", and most of us know that it isn't always possible to do it. Less frequently do we hear the plea that politics should be kept out of philately, while I can't remember any recent suggestions that collectors of Argentinian stamps should be sent to the Tower. However, in researching an article for Mainsheet on the 1877 surcharges of Honduras, I came across what I regard as a particularly nasty example of the gratuitous dragging of political value judgments into an otherwise excellent philatelic article: "In 1823 the five Central American States declared themselves a free and independent nation; and having in 1825 adopted a Federal Constitution, began the stormy battle scarred career of the Republic of Central America which finally terminated in 1839, the individual states that had not already assumed sovereign powers then doing so. Since that time each has maintained the status of an independent sovereign state except when impinged by the preposterous claims of Great Britain to the Mosquito Coast, her rape of British Honduras from Guatemala in utter disregard of her treaty pledges to Spain and the 'Bad Neighbor' policy of certain administrations of the United States." Thank you, friends and allies ..... Had the article been concerned with Guatemala's map stamps or their "Belice es Nuestro" overprint, the author might have been forgiven for intruding his personal value judgments, but as background to the 1877 issue of Honduras that seems unnecessary and unhelpful. I believe that the author was President of a stamp firm based on that city where, according to the poet, "the Cabots speak only to God". If the Cabots can stretch a point could they tell the author to keep political controversy for those places where it is both helpful and necessary to indulge in it?

BERNARD DAVIES

# MORE NICARAGUAN NOTES by DOUGLAS BAYLISS

## AN HISTORICAL NOTE

This short account of a little-known aspect of the history of Nicaragua comes from a recent German Auction Catalogue*. The entry is given verbatim and thanks are due to Denis Vandervelde who drew my attention to it

" Los 400 1856, postgeschichtichle Einmaligkeit der klassiscen Epoche der USA. Ausführliche Beschreibung dieses Unikats in englisch.

THE NICARAGUAN EXPEDITION

A P Crittenden was the attorney to, and a financial supporter of Col. William Walker, who with a filibustering force of 62 men, including Alexander Jones sailed from San Francisco to Nicaragua in May, 1855 in an attempt to control that country. Originally supported by Charles Vanderbilt and the Accessory Transit Company, Vanderbilt successfully conspired for his downfall. Walker surrendered to the U.S. Navy in May 1857.

PAY DEPARTMENT NICARAGUAN ARMY manuscript endorsement and matching P (aid?) on cover to Annie Critchenden at San Francisco, original letter from Alexander Jones dated Pay Department, Grenada, October 27, 1856, while with the Waker Expedition. 'I am going to San Juan del Sur in a few days to meet your father (A P Crittenden) whom I expect on the next Steamer. I have not been out of the City since my return, excepting twice. Once about 2 miles around the City when in command of the night police; and once 10 miles up the lake after 10 o'clock on a scout of my own getting up.'

The only recorded cover from this campaign! Ausruf 4,500."

(* According to John Fosbery, who must also be given thanks for sending this extract to the Editor before he received Doug.'s article, this was an Auction of Edgar Mohrmann, Hamburg, 12-14 October 1982. - Ed.)

## KILIAN NATHAN's NICARAGUA OFFICIAL ENVELOPE OF 1893 as illustrated in our Issue 9.

Let me begin with a question. Why was an envelope of this type thought necessary? Possible uses I can think of are (1) Sending returns to the U.P.U. (2) Correspondence with other postal authorities (3) Sending lists of registered articles and Acknowledgment of Receipt forms to the country of destination in accordance with U.P.U. Regulations in force at that time, and (4) Returning signed Acknowledgment of Receipt forms to the office of origin. For uses 3 and 4 the envelope should have been registered but not stamped. This example shows no trace of registration, so the contents may have been an inter-office letter.

Up to 1912 all Nicaraguan postal stationery envelopes were printed either by Hamilton Bank Note Co. or by American Bank Note Co., but from Mr Nathan's description this was possibly an imported commercial envelope on which the seal was printed locally. I have several examples of Official envelopes used for sending Acknowledgment of Receipt forms by Hungary and Colombia. These are not listed by Higgins and Gage, and it is possible that this may apply to other coutries as well. May I suggest that this is because production of such envelopes was not covered by Government Decree, but was an administrative decision of the Postal Authorities; also, they were not on sale to the general public. The only Official postal stationery I can recollect having seen listed by Higgins and Gage is the series of cards, and also two wrappers, used by Chile.

continued on page 7

## AN APOLOGY

Through no fault of your Editor, this issue has appeared about a month late. This is entirely my fault as it has not proved possible to type-up and print this issue owing to my moving house. Future issues should appear on time.

MPB

MORE NICARAGUAN NOTES (Cont.)

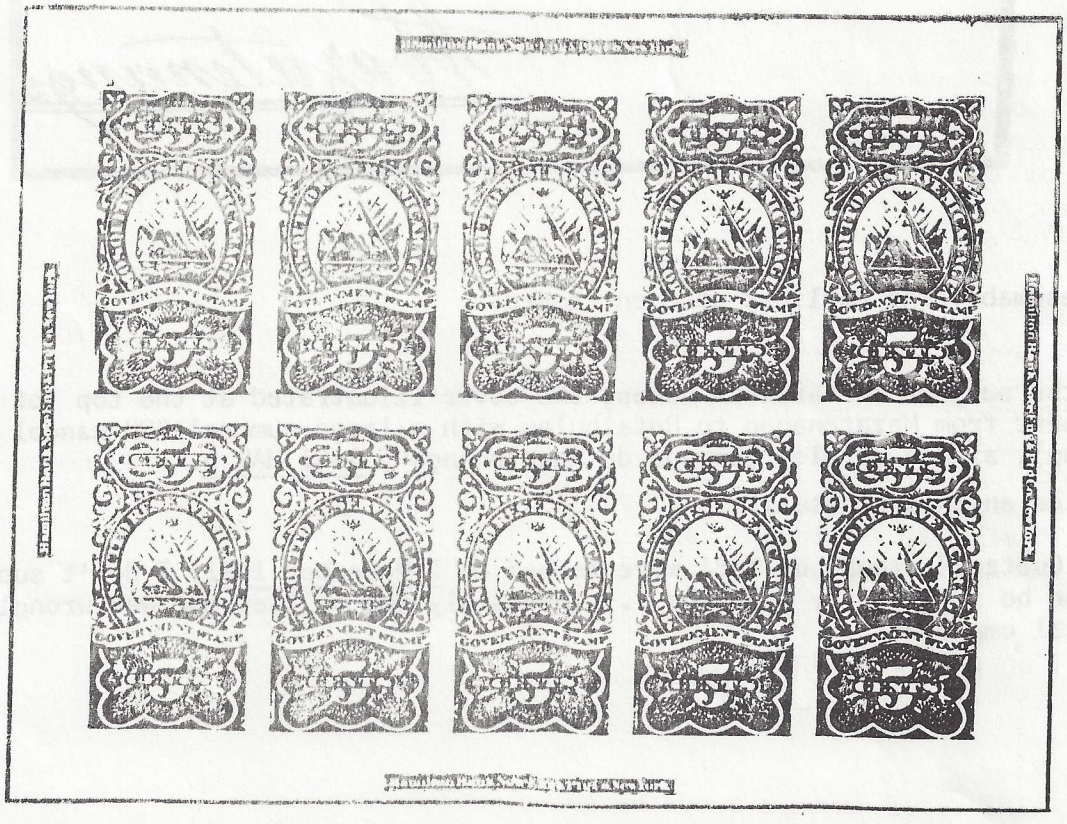
AN APPARENTLY UNRECORDED MOSQUITO RESERVE STAMP

I have got hold of a Mosquito Reserve stamp unlike the kind recorded by Robson Lowe and others. There is no imprint, but the engraving looks as if it may be by the ABN Co. The design is similar to that of the large Waterlow fiscals surcharged for Official use in 1907, though the values are expressed in Cents, no doubt because of silver currency being used in the Mosquito territory at that time.

---

A REPLY by Michael P Birks

Doug's stamps, 5c vermilion, 10c violet and 25c blue can be found listed in Forbin's fiscal catalogue. They were printed by the Hamilton Bank Note Co., as can be seen from the impressions round the proof sheet of ten illustrated below. The illustration on the right shows what amounts to an artist's sketch, using the 1889 stamps as a guide. Added underneath are the probable quantities of each value printed "5 mil".



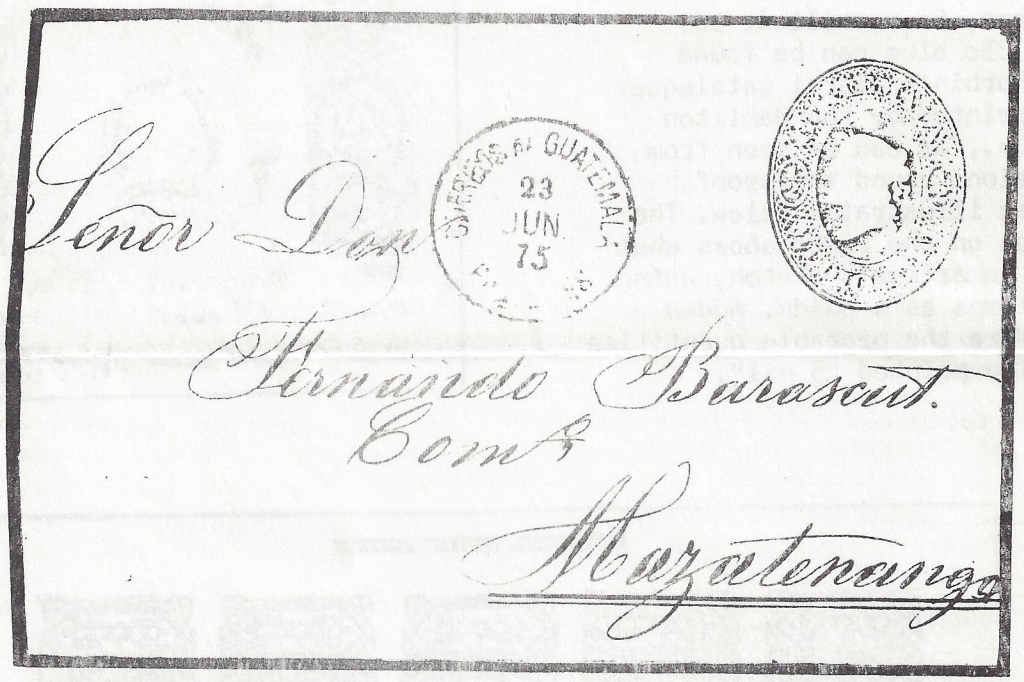
# EARLIEST RECORDED DATE ON POSTAL STATIONERY ENVELOPE "LIBERTY HEAD" ½ REAL GREEN? by "QUETZAL"

The postal stationery envelopes "Liberty Head" ½r green, 1r blue and 2r red were put on sale in April 1875. In issue 7 of March 1982, the earliest recorded dates for the stamps on covers of this issue were given as follows:

19 September 1875 for the 1r, and
4 October 1875 for the 2r.

For the ¼r and ½r the handbook on page 75 gives the dates as 1 June 1876 and 29 January 1876 respectively.

The ½r envelope light green on amber in question (H&G No.1, handbook EN 1 on page 566) was sent from Guatemala to Mazatenango, bears a single circle in green "Correos de Guatemala - Paquetes" and date of 23 JUN 75. No backstamp as is usual for this period.

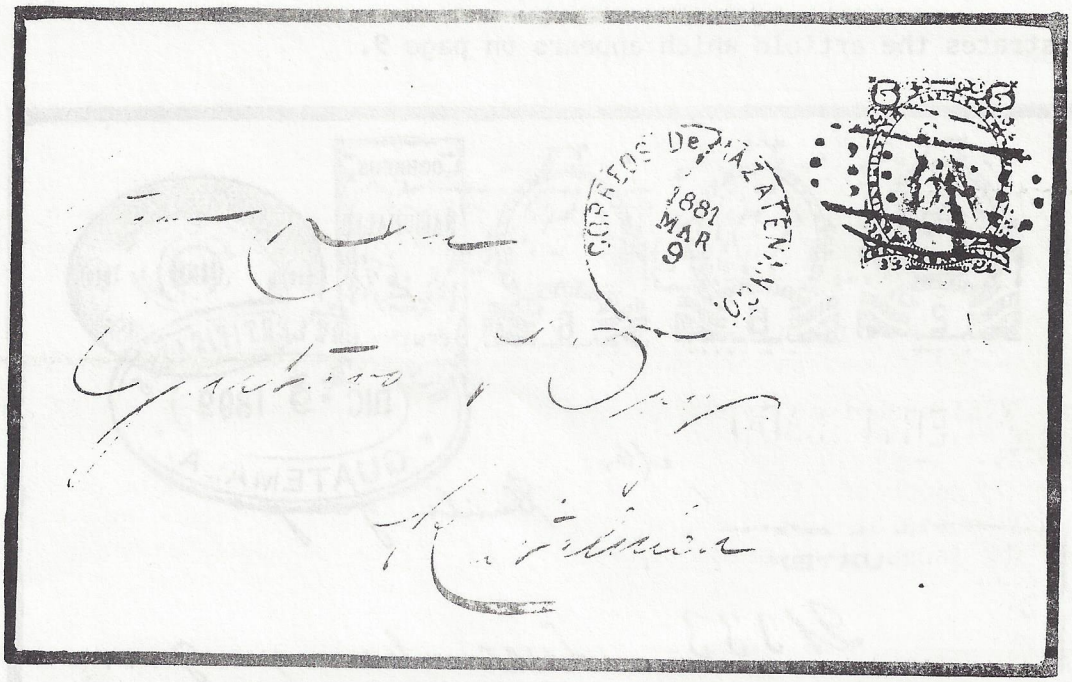



This is presumably the earliest date on record.

Whilst on the subject of earliest dates, the cover illustrated at the top of the next page, was sent from Mazatenango to Retalhuleu with a large numeral "9" cancel (upside-down), single circle "Correos de Mazatenango", 1881 MAR 9.

Do you notice anything unusual?

The "Small Quetzal" stamps of 1881 were issued on 7 November 1881. I don't suppose the handbook can be in error by 8 months ..... Possibly the obliterator was wrongly adjusted by the postal employee.




## FEDERICO SAURECK - FAKER PAR EXCELLENCE by "QUETZAL"

One of the most prolific and dangerous fakers of Guatemalan overprinted stamps to the detriment of many collectors was undoubtedly the above gentleman (I leave you to decide whether "gentleman" is the right expression; if you have been caught then you will call him something else ...).

His history is reasonably well written-up in the handbook. Briefly, he is described as a stamp dealer of German origin with an Argentinian passport and operated around the turn of the century from Guatemala City. As can be seen from the illustration on the next page he called himself "Federico Saureck - Comisiones & Consignaciones" which leaves open the question in what sort of merchandise he was actually dealing.

It must have come as a relief to many collectors when in the early 1900's he was shot dead in a pub by another dealer.

As to covers the handbook states as a warning: "Fakes are found tied to piece or cover with plausible cancellations".

I had never seen a genuinely used Saureck fake on cover of the 1898 provisionals (Waterlow engraved revenue stamps), SG90/98, Scott 88/96, but recently one attractive envelope came my way.

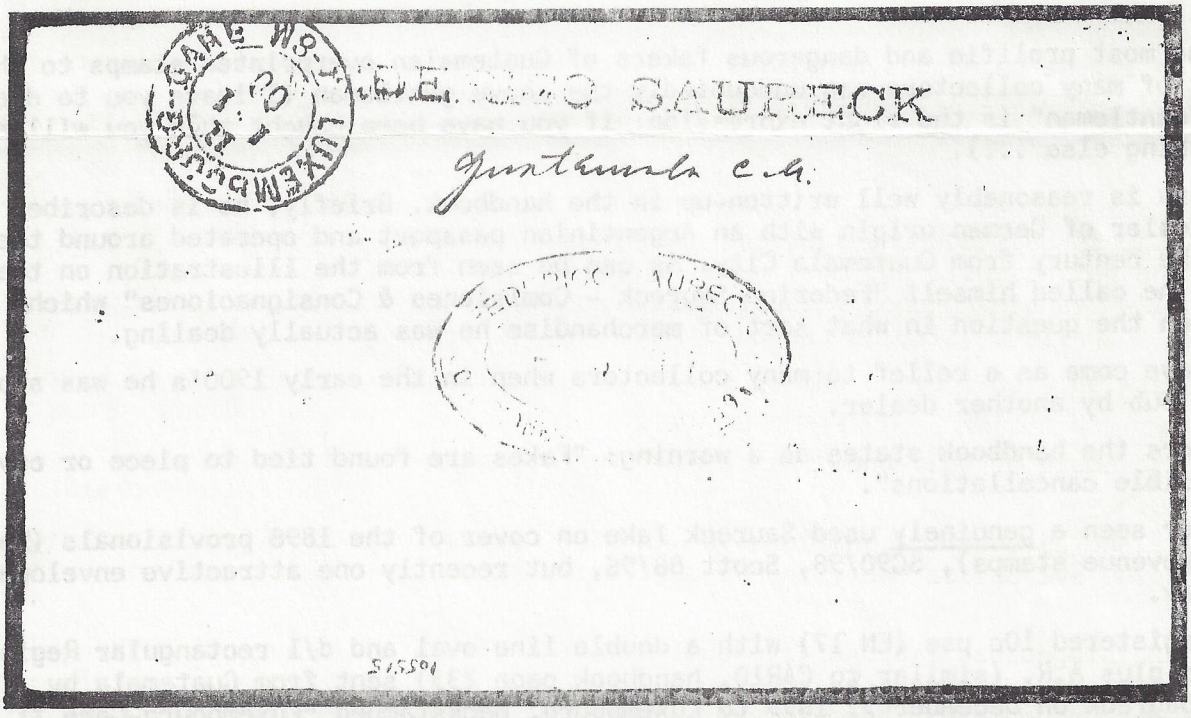
It is a registered 10c pse (EN 17) with a double line oval and d/l rectangular Registration handstamps plus A.R. (similar to CAR10, handbook page 233) sent from Guatemala by Federico Saureck on December 9, 1899 to Luxembourg, beckstamped "Luxembourg-Gare 11.1.1900". The total postage was 25 centavos which appears to be correct. It is franked with SG44,46,47 and the provisional 2c on 1c magenta, SG91 (Scott 44,46,47 and 92), the latter with inverted overprint in black. A typical Saureck fake and as far as I can make out, the one described in the handbook on page 179 as Fake A9 with "s" of "Correos" cut off at the bottom.

It is interesting to note that "Yvert" still mentions this stamp (together with 3 others of the same series) as "existing with inverted overprints".

I wonder how many such Saureck fakes exist on genuinely used covers.

Have you come across any?

This cover illustrates the article which appears on page 9.




---

BIOGRAPHY - JUSTO RUFINO BARRIOS (1835-1885)

was President of Guatemala between 1873 and 1885, following a revolution he led, which brought to an end the thirty year period of Conservative rule there. As President he initiated a number of Liberal reforms aimed at reducing the power of the Church, and encouraging economic development. He also sought to extend those reforms to neighbouring Republics. Between 1872 and 1874 he joined Salvadorean President Santiago González in securing the overthrow of the Honduran Governments led by José María Medina and Céleo Arias. In 1876 Barrios broke with his former ally, invaded El Salvador on March 27, and secured the creation of a new governemnt under the leadership of Rafael Zaldívar. Seeking to achieve Central American unification through forceful means, Barrios again invaded El Salvador in 1885, but he lost his life at the battle of Chalchuapa on April 2 1885.